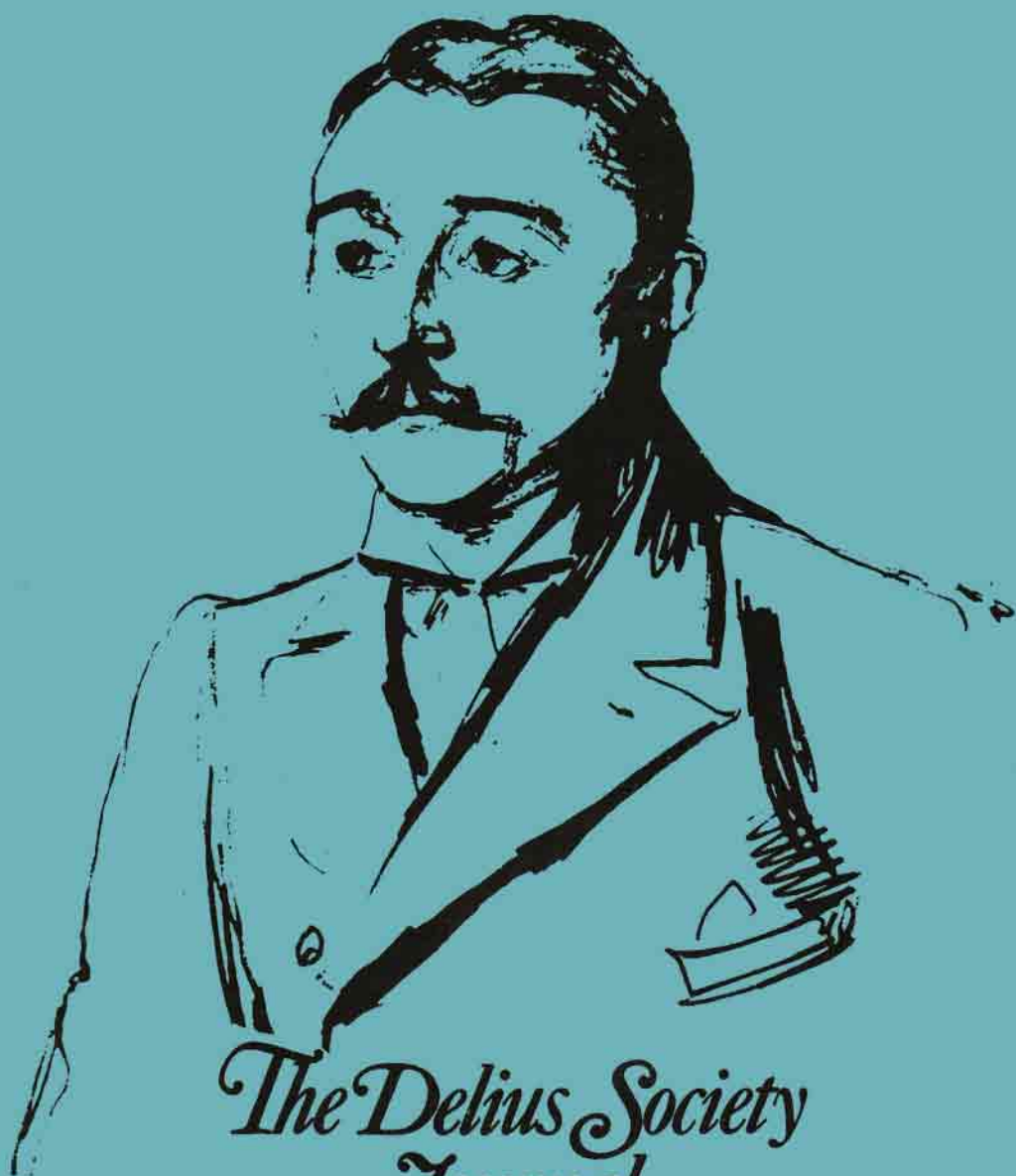

July 1982, Number 76



*The Delius Society
Journal*

The Delius Society Journal

July 1982, Number 76

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With this issue we mark the centenary of the birth on July 8, 1882 of Percy Grainger, composer, pianist, collector and arranger of folk-songs, and friend of Delius.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial | 3 |
| Delius and Grieg: Aspects of Apprenticeship by Andrew J Boyle ... | 5 |
| Record Reviews: Vernon Handley's new Delius record | 15 |
| Grainger plays Delius on piano rolls | 17 |
| Midlands Branch reports: Percy Grainger | 20 |
| Elgar's Enigma solved | 21 |
| Obituary: Marjorie Tapley | 23 |
| Correspondence | 23 |
| Forthcoming Events | 24 |

Acknowledgements

The cover illustration is an early sketch of Delius by Edvard Munch reproduced by kind permission of the Curator of the Munch Museum, Oslo. The photograph of Dr Fenby was kindly supplied by Yorkshire Television and the photograph of Grainger and Delius was made available from the Delius Trust Archives by Dr. Lionel Carley.

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EDITORIAL

Nearly forty members attended the Annual General Meeting at Mary Ward House, London, on the afternoon of June 12th. In view of their recent attendance at the Keele Delius Festival in March, our regular visitors from abroad understandably felt unable to be present at the AGM as well, but it was a great pleasure on this occasion to welcome Mr Gilhespy from Switzerland.

The matter of greatest moment at the meeting was a resolution from the floor that our subscription be raised to ten pounds. However, the Treasurer argued convincingly that, while some increase did seem necessary, this could be satisfactorily contained to a pound only, taking effect from next April. He further suggested that, in view of the pound having fluctuated in our favour with regard to incoming dollar subscriptions, the American rate should remain unaltered. Both these proposals were carried. The Treasurer did express some concern over the number of American subscriptions still overdue, namely those in the Philadelphia Branch. He felt that there was possibly some confusion with quite a few members not realising that membership of the Philadelphia Branch does not automatically entitle them to UK membership. He was fully aware of the heavy demands that two subscriptions totalling 32 dollars must make on those members, but many to whom the situation has been clarified have since fully enrolled, and we respectfully hope that others will quickly follow suit. (The Treasurer's address is to be found on page one.) The non-payment of a number of US subscriptions has necessarily resulted in our financial balance being considerably lower than earlier anticipated. Every effort is being made to clear up the existing confusion, and the Treasurer spoke of looking forward to a healthier balance in the future when this has been resolved.

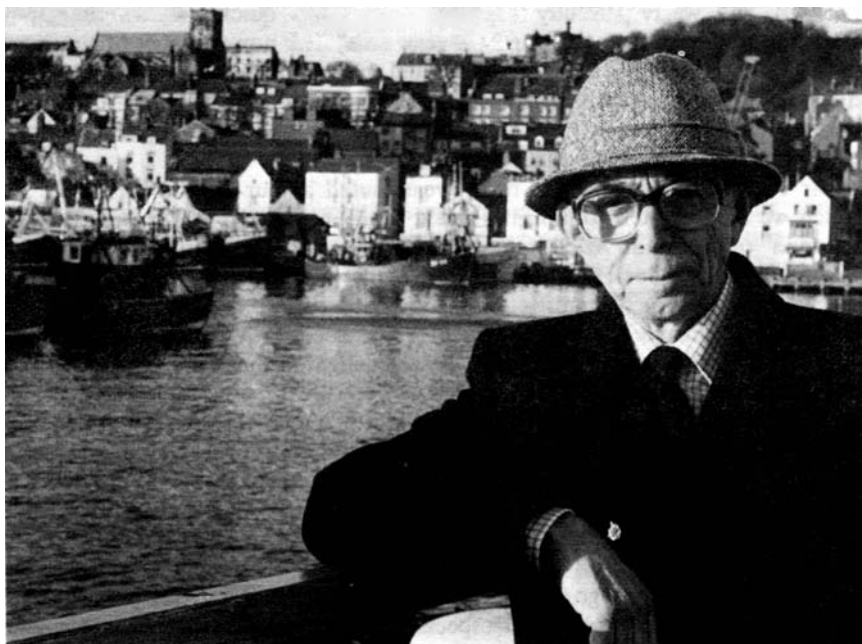
Mr Freestone, who has for many years acted as our Auditor, a service for which we are indebted to him, has asked if any member is willing to serve as a 'stand-in' or Assistant Auditor in the case of work rendering him unavailable when required for Society auditing. Any volunteer should contact the Chairman. We welcome to the Committee Miss Diane Eastwood who has over the past year done invaluable secretarial work for the Society. At the meeting she was duly elected as Honorary Secretary. We are delighted that Miss Estelle Palmley will continue to serve as Membership Secretary.

It is always a sad duty to report the death of a member, and in this issue the Midlands Chairman pays tribute to the memory of Marjorie Tapley. May we also offer our deepest sympathies to Sir Thomas Armstrong, the senior musical advisor to the Delius Trust, on the death last May of his wife, Lady Armstrong, a loss that will surely be keenly felt by those who had the pleasure and privilege of knowing her.

Our congratulations go to Vernon Handley on receiving this year's Audio Award 'for his services to music — especially British music — via the gramophone record'. His recent CfP Delius record (reviewed in this issue) apparently sold 19,000 copies in the first month of its issue. For Classics for Pleasure he is also recording the Delius Piano Concerto with Philip Fowke and the Hallé Orchestra, to be coupled with the John Ireland concerto. The BBC world première of

Margot la Rouge, broadcast last February, is to be released on record, as was *The Magic Fountain*, on the BBC's own label, and on June 8th 1983 Dr Fenby is to conduct the opera's American premiere at Saint Louis. This will be its first staging anywhere. Later that same year the much praised Saint Louis production of *Fennimore and Gerda* (see Journal 73) is to be presented at the Edinburgh Festival. As we go to press, on Sunday July 11th at the Royal Festival Hall, Dr Fenby is conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in *The Walk to the Paradise Garden* and *Appalachia*. This exciting 'spin-off' from 'The Fenby Legacy' will be reported in the next issue.

Finally, under consideration is a new service through the Journal. There must be many members with lists of 'wants' as regards records, books and scores, as well as possibly having similar items for sale. Members are therefore invited to send in details of such wants and items for sale or exchange for inclusion on an insert to be sent out with the Journal, periodically according to demand. This, it is hoped, will facilitate the acquisition of those less easily obtained records and books and in this way members, however far apart, may be able to assist each other. Initially at least, before we can judge the response to this new service, these various items should be restricted to those that have a direct bearing on Delius.



Eric Fenby returns to Scarborough, his native town. A sequence from Yorkshire Television documentary '*Song of Farewell*' to be transmitted on the full ITV Network at 4.30 p.m. on Sunday August 1.

DELIUS AND GRIEG

ASPECTS OF APPRENTICESHIP

by Andrew J. Boyle

Between the years 1898 and 1902 Delius's art crystallized into the highly individual style in which his finest works are written. The essential characteristics of the idiom were its distinctive, though limited, vocabulary and usage of chords, and the 'vehicle' of this harmony, a continuous flow of motif-evolution within organized structural blocks. At this time Delius was approaching forty, and had been writing seriously for fifteen years: he had reached the climax of a long period of development.

The works which date from the composer's apprenticeship repay close study, reflecting the stages of steady progress towards the maturing of his style around the turn of the century. Delius's unfailing belief in his talents and creative ideals was remarkable, particularly so when the musical evidence indicates that both his harmonic language and mastery of instrumentation were already well developed a decade before his full maturity (that is, by the early 1890's). Thus the greater part of the period of development does seem to have been a patient search for the means by which his harmonic language might be given logic and motion ¹. The emergence of the basics of his harmonic idiom — the most crucial stage in the formation of his personal style — took place, indeed, in a relatively short time during the first four years of serious work, 1886 — 1890. The scores of this early period are also strongly marked by the influence of the music of Edvard Grieg. In tracing the connections between Delius's indebtedness to Grieg and the flourishing of his own powers, we gain one of the most intriguing and illuminating insights into Delius's creative process.

Delius arrived at the Leipzig Conservatory in the autumn of 1886, to commence an eighteen-month course. The extent of his practical training to that date consisted of some useful, though conventional, lessons in harmony and counterpoint given him while master of his Florida orange-grove in 1884. A few compositions surviving from the years 1885-1886 are undistinguished works (mostly songs and piano pieces), occasionally revealing an early indebtedness to the style of Grieg, with which Delius had been familiar since a youth. At this time, a second generation of teachers at Leipzig seem to have been resting somewhat on the laurels won for the Conservatory by its eminent founders, Mendelssohn and Schumann, and after his first term a disappointed Delius attended few classes there. The advances which his technique made during the period may be accounted for rather in the education received at the opera house, and in his fortunate choice of acquaintances.

The first meeting with Grieg, in the autumn of 1887, was arranged by Christian Sinding, who knew both men well. Although Grieg was by some twenty years Delius's senior and enjoying considerable international fame,

there began a close friendship which was to last until his death in 1907. Throughout the relationship Grieg acted in the valuable capacity of mentor to the young composer, offering encouragement and frank criticism on the many manuscripts sent to him for comment.

Affinities between the artistic attitudes of the two men are clear: both recalled that sympathies with the music of Chopin and Wagner had influenced the direction of their musical developments; they shared a love for mountain-nature in general, for Norwegian mountains in particular, and a wish to express it in music; and both men were embarrassed by a fundamental inadequacy in problems of musical structure. Delius did absorb and outgrow quickly the impact made upon him by Grieg, the works of 1890 onwards showing that a confidence in his own personality was gaining strength. Yet, the importance of the friendship as an encouragement to the student composer should not be underestimated. It is more than coincidence that, having previously written only a few trifles, Delius found a richly productive vein in 1886-1889, simultaneous with the beginning of their acquaintance.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 1887 | | Orchestral suite <i>Florida</i> |
| | | German part-songs |
| | | <i>Norwegian Sleigh Ride</i> for piano ² |
| 1888 | * | Incidental music to <i>Zanoni</i> (incomplete sketch) |
| | * | Melodrama <i>Paa Vidderne</i> (voice and orchestra) |
| | * | Tone-poem <i>Hiawatha</i> (part of manuscript missing) |
| | * | <i>Rhapsodic Variations</i> (incomplete orchestral sketch) |
| | * | Suite for violin and orchestra |
| | * | String Quartet (part of manuscript missing) |
| | | Five songs from the Norwegian |
| | * | Swedish folksongs (lost) |
| | * | Two miscellaneous songs |
| 1889 | * | <i>Sakuntala</i> (tenor and orchestra) |
| | * | Romance for violin and piano |
| | * | Suite d'Orchestre |
| | * | <i>Idylle de Printemps</i> |
| | | Seven songs from the Norwegian |
| | | <i>Chanson de Fortunio</i> (voice and piano) |
| | * | unpublished works |

In the following pages I would like to illustrate musical points-of-contact which these works reveal.

a. Use of the pedal-point

During the few years at the outset of Delius's creative career when similarities with the idiom of Grieg's music are most pronounced, the two extremes of his talent are clearly discernable. Just as Delius's flair and feeling

for expressive harmony is the strength of even his earliest works, so is his failure to plan for them a coherent structural form often the most disabling factor. Conventional forms were unsuited to the lyrical, 'rhapsodic' nature of his talent, and he was either uninterested in or ignorant of the structural subtleties of key-relationship. Not surprisingly, therefore, one finds that Delius's argument is far more compatible with the medium of song at this stage. Indeed, most of his well-known songs date from 1888-1890, including *Sunset*, *Young Venevil* and *Twilight Fancies*.

In tackling the problems posed by the large-scale dimensions of his orchestral and chamber works of the period, Delius was forced to adopt means of extending or supporting his material – scaffolding to hold up his essentially unsymphonic expression. Foremost among these devices were the use of 'pedals' and sequential repetition (usually involving third-related movement: see below). Despite the mannered sound they distinctly convey, tonic pedals or tonic and dominant pedals are widely employed in Delius's early music, having several useful applications. For somewhat different reasons the pedal-point was a feature of similar importance in the idiom of Grieg. In his 'Study of Grieg's Harmony', Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe writes:

Pedal point effects (often of the 'drone bass' type) are characteristic of Norwegian folk music Grieg's style was, as it is well known, strongly influenced by national idioms. Accordingly, one finds a most pronounced use of pedal point effects in his music. These occur so frequently, not only in works that are especially Norwegian . . . but also in works of less national character that they constitute one of his major characteristics.³

Most of Grieg's stylized 'Halling' and 'Springdansen' compositions incorporate a tonic or tonic and dominant pedal-point as the foundation of diatonic, though often dissonant, upper harmony (see, for examples, Op.17 Nos. 7 and 20, and Op. 38 No 5). In several early songs, Delius adopts the device as a simple means of easing himself into the piece:

Ex.1: Delius, *The Nightingale*, (c. 1888), bars 3 – 6



(see also *Summer Eve*, and *Slumber Song*)

This is the point-of-departure for Delius's orchestral 'pedal'-technique. On many occasions in the large-scale works he employs the device to add substance and dissonant colour to extended passages of otherwise unremark-

able harmony. *Florida*, his first orchestral score, depends greatly on such effects, long pedal sections occurring in the first movement between bars 158-178, 217-229 and 315-339, and in the second movement at bars 35-51. The third movement is built almost entirely on short pedal-points. With this technique harmonic continuity is practically reduced to a standstill, and the composer must rely on rhythmic, melodic and instrumental subtleties to achieve a sense of flow and interest. In their absence, as in the second movement of his Suite for violin and orchestra ⁴, Delius may still rely heavily on the pedal as a prop buttressing rather weak imagination, and giving an unfortunate mannered sound to the whole. By 1889, when he composed *Sakuntala* ⁵, Delius is using the pedal much in the fashion that it occurs in the orchestral music of his maturity, as an anchor stabilizing passages of expressive harmony. Already it is an individual voice which is heard in the work's opening bars, without nationalist echo or mannerism:

Ex.2: Delius, *Sakuntala*, (1889), bars 1 – 5

The musical score for the opening of Delius's *Sakuntala* (bars 1-5) is presented in a two-system format. The top system includes a Tenor vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Ich konn-te vor Sehn-sucht nicht schla- - - fen, Ein". The piano accompaniment features muted strings and wind, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The bottom system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "Blum-en-wind wagt - e her - ein." and the piano accompaniment. The tempo and mood are indicated as "Andante, molto tranquillo".

b. Sliding chromatic harmony

The principle of underpinning harmonic licence with a stable bass has important extensions in Delius's fascination with sliding chromatic lines and chromatic harmony. In this distinctive area of the composer's language the influences on his development are less easy to determine. Not only did Delius himself have a remarkable intuition and feeling from the outset of his career for expressive harmony, but the three composers who made the strongest impressions upon his development, Chopin, Wagner and Grieg, were

all adventurous harmonists with chromatic idioms that overlapped to some degree. Yet similarities in the uses made of chromaticism by Grieg and the apprentice Delius are certainly striking and, though inconclusive, should be mentioned here. Examples 3a – d illustrate typical instances of two chromatic procedures common in the style of Grieg, and how they were later adopted by Delius:

Ex.3a: Grieg, *Ein Schwan*, Op. 25 No.2 (1876), bars 5 – 6



Ex.3b: Delius, *Early String Quartet*⁶ (1888), third movement, bars 6 – 9



Ex.3c: Grieg, Op.38 No.8 (1883), bars 23 – 26



Ex.3d: Delius, *Melodrama: Paa Vidderne*,⁷ (1888), bars 516 – 518



In all cases the pedal principle discussed above is applied as the foundation of melodic chromaticism. In the third and fourth examples, the roles have been reversed, with a stable inner pedal providing the harmonic focus for a bass slipping through descending semitones. The chromatically sliding bass is the commonest use of chromaticism by both Grieg in his works published before 1885, and Delius in his initial period of composition between 1885 and 1890.⁸

From the beginning of his output Delius also ventured to use bold sequences of triads or sevenths descending by semitones:

Ex.4: Delius, *Hochgebirgsleben*⁹ (1888), bars 11 – 13



Again, the notable instances of such parallelism in Grieg's music would have served more to emphasize for Delius the impressions made upon him by Chopin's pioneering treatment of the device in his mature works (see, for Chopin, the conclusion of his Op.30 No.4, and for Grieg, the first movement of his string quartet, Op.27 bars 61 – 64, and Op.43 No.4 bars 13 – 15).

c. Particular chords

It is impractical to isolate a single harmony or chord from the rich, individual language of Delius's early style and suggest a cross-section of likely sources from which it may have been derived by the composer. It is, after all, the imaginative context in which the chords are set which provide so much of his idiomatic colour, rather than the chords themselves. To this general rule, however, must be added notable exceptions. First, the diatonic seventh chords on the tonic and subdominant. These, used as non-dissonant harmonies, had become a personal trait, a deliberate 'fingerprint', in Grieg's language, probably arising from his use of folk-like pedal points. The unresolved dissonances were used widely in different harmonic styles and situations (see, for instances, Op.12 No.6 bars 1 – 4, Op.25 No.2 bar 1, and Op.39 No.2 bars 4 – 5). In following his precedent exactly, Delius could not avoid bringing to this element of his harmony an unfortunate sense of mannerism, or worse – of second-hand mannerism. As in other aspects of Delius's language, however, the shadow of Grieg was eventually removed from the harmony by the moulding of his own needs:

Ex.5: Delius, *Romance for violin and piano*,¹⁰ (1889), bars 1 – 7



Secondly should be noted not an actual chord but a chordal position – the ‘second inversion’ or 6/4. This became for Delius the most usual position for his chords following a modulation, chromatic progression, or at any time he wished to avoid an over-emphatic tonic. Schjelderup–Ebbe describes Grieg as “one of the great liberators of this chord”, and asserts that Grieg “proves the many possibilities that it possesses for colouristic usage.”¹¹

d. Third-relation

One of the chief means whereby ambiguity of tonality may be created is by sudden changes of key, which is also a major device for obtaining colouristic effects. As used for both these purposes such key-changes are most characteristic of Grieg’s style and are found extensively throughout his works The unifying factor in such changes is often the relationship by thirds between the chords or keys involved.¹²

Harmonic movement by third-relation is one of the principal constituents of Delius’s music up to 1890. He used the device – indeed, overused it – in two contexts, for both of which precedents were comprehensively available in the music of Grieg. First, harmonic progression by third-movement. In its simplest form, as an alternating progression from tonic chord to either mediant or flattened submediant and back again to tonic, this effect is seen in *Florida* at bars 196 – 200 of the first movement, and in *Hiawatha*¹³ at bars 253 – 256 of the incomplete score (see also the conclusion of Grieg’s Op.25 No.2). Rather more interesting, however, are the extensions of the same principle on a few occasions to a sequence of third-related progressions. In the following illustration (Ex.6) the piece’s tonality is swung full circle in three transpositions:

Ex.6: Delius, *Hochgebirgsleben*,¹⁴ (1888), bars 25 – 29

In one sequence in *Sleigh Ride* (bars 31 – 39), by descending first by a major then a minor third Delius prolongs the progression for six transpositions.

Secondly, and far more important, third-related modulation. The early orchestral works are characterized by the prominence of blocks of material set in tonal centres a major third or minor third apart. *Florida* and *Hiawatha* share a certain naivety linked directly to the composer's pre-dilection for stating a theme in the tonic key, shifting up or down a third and repeating the material, then maybe returning to the tonic for a further repetition (see *Florida*: I, bars 67 – 80; II, bars 13 – 16; and III, bars 67 – 105). *Hiawatha* also employs a circle of third-relation identical to that of Example 6, only now extended to modulation: from F major to A major at bars 43 – 44, to C sharp major at bars 52 – 53, and to F major again at bars 71 – 72.

The appeal which this crude manner of working had for the composer at this stage can only be understood in terms of the problems he was experiencing in manipulating his material, which was prone to be rather short-winded. In order to prolong his material in lengthy spans, Delius was to develop a process of motif-evolution from 1890 onwards.

Grieg himself never abandoned the reliance on third-related progressions and modulations for, unlike Delius, he did not overcome his innate awkwardness with the problems of extended form – his "inability to achieve rhythmic continuity throughout a sonata movement", as John Horton has described it.¹⁵

e. Miscellaneous

It has already been illustrated that Delius freely adopted some of Grieg's personal harmonic mannerisms. Two melodic 'fingerprints' can be added here. First, the distinctive descending three-note pattern of 'tonic – leading note – dominant' used by Grieg not only to begin his piano concerto (Op.16), but in a great variety of guises throughout his output (see Op.29 No.1 bars 4 – 5, Op.33 No.2 bar 24, Op.33 No.8 bars 2 – 3). Among the many occurrences of the figure in Delius's early music, one may point out in particular those at bars 66 and 202 of the surviving sketches for *Zanoni*¹⁶, and at bars 108 – 115 of the melodrama *Paa Vidderne*¹⁷.

Secondly, the use of the mordent, in Grieg's case probably deriving from folk-influence. The instances in his work are practically innumerable, and are especially common in pieces of a distinctly nationalist character (see Op.17

Nos. 1, 9, 13 etc.). Delius employs mordents in a similar fashion, uninhibited by the impression inevitably given of 'following in the master's footsteps' (see *The Bird's Story*, bars 43 – 49, and *Summer Eve*, bars 1 – 2).

Finally, one cannot omit from a discussion of Grieg's influence on Delius some mention of the several rhythmic similarities between works of the composers. The three instances described below are particularly striking:



One finds this 'saraband'-like rhythm as early in Grieg's output as the third movement of the piano sonata, Op.7 (see also *Summer Evening*, Op.71 No.2), and also on two occasions in Delius's early scores, in the *Rhapsodic Variations* (var.2)¹⁸, and the opening of the third movement of his early string quartet¹⁹.

b) Ex.7:



In 1889, Delius orchestrated the *Norwegian Bridal Procession* from Grieg's Op.19. The springy, dotted-note rhythm of this piece, common in the Norwegian's folk-style, bears a close kinship with the theme of Delius's *Sleigh Ride* (Ex.7).



Grieg employs this rhythm as the dynamo to drive the first movement of his string quartet. In an almost identical fashion, the Finale of Delius's early quartet is motivated by the following rhythm:



* * * * *

It has been suggested with some authority²⁰ that the influences which were working between Grieg and Delius were not actually from the elder, famous composer to the student, but the other way round. There has been little evidence suggested in support of this theory, and I hope that the detailing in this article of several important areas where Grieg's influence had a direct bearing on the work of Delius will help to avoid further confusion. Because Grieg was essentially a miniaturist, the highly personal, often original achievements in his musical idiom are liable to be too readily overlooked. To maintain a correct perspective of his influence upon Delius, one must keep in

mind that, although Delius quickly established himself as an artist with a well-defined, strong, personal identity, at the time when Grieg's music and friendship meant most to him he was in an impressionable stage of creative infancy.

Through an understanding of the shifting balance in Delius's art between these forces one can appreciate how Delius could write a piece so steeped in the idiom of Grieg to be almost a pastiche, when invited by the Norwegian to bring a new composition to his Christmas party in 1887: the *Norwegian Sleigh Ride*. Similarly, it becomes clear how Delius could set nine songs to texts already set by Grieg, yet never duplicate the musical response of the elder composer to the same words.

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. A search carried out mostly through the medium of opera, as five of Delius's six operas were written between 1890 and 1902.
2. The published piano version of this piece is a fine arrangement by Robert Threlfall of the orchestral *Sleigh Ride*. The original manuscript has not been traced.
3. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *A Study of Grieg's Harmony. With Special Reference to his Contribution to Musical Impressionism*, Oslo, 1953, pp 67 – 9.
4. Probably 1888. Delius Trust Volume 3
5. Delius Trust Volume 4.
6. Delius Trust Volume 35
7. Delius Trust Volume 2
8. Another of Grieg's most attractive mannerisms employs a slipping bass – the progression from a minor triad to the 6/4 of its relative major (see Op.33 No.5 from bar 11, and the opening of Op.33 No.2). Delius uses the device extensively throughout his early works.
9. Delius Trust Volume 36
10. Delius Trust Volume 35
11. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *op.cit.*, p.51.
12. Dag Schjelderup-Ebbe, *op.cit.*, p.150
13. Delius Trust Volume 1
14. Delius Trust Volume 36
15. John Horton, *Grieg, A Symposium*, ed. G. Abraham, London, 1948, p.119
16. Delius Trust Volume 39. The second example is reproduced in Rachel Lowe, *A Catalogue of the Music Archive of the Delius Trust*, London, p.137, top line.
17. Delius Trust Volume 2
18. Delius Trust Volume 3
19. Delius Trust Volume 35
20. See Robin Legge, *Daily Telegraph*, October 12 1929 p.6. The argument has been recently brought to light by Lionel Carley in his *Delius, The Paris Years*, Triad Press, 1975, (p.75).

Acknowledgement is made to Augener Ltd., London for quotation from *The Nightingale*. The remaining Delius examples are quoted by courtesy of the Delius Trust.

RECORD REVIEWS

VERNON HANDLEY'S NEW DELIUS RECORD

DELIUS. *Brigg Fair, Eventyr, In a Summer Garden, A Song of Summer.* Hallé Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley. Classics for Pleasure CFP40373 (Cassette available).

By way of introduction here are two published reviews of this record, taken from *'The Monthly Guide to Recorded Music'* and *'Classical Music'* respectively:

'This is not Vernon Handley's first recording of Delius, but it sounds as though he is a newcomer to the composer. He eschews everything that makes Beecham's performances so distinguished: the gentleness (even at climaxes), the 'flow', the perfection of ensemble and the 'affinity with nature'. Without producing examples, this is not Delius of the first water; and since the test pressings sent to us were full of clicks and scratches and grumbles (albeit a 'marvellous' digital recording), it is kinder to all concerned to let the matter rest there and to offer no recommendation for this record.'

'*Eventyr* and *In a Summer Garden* are both superior to what is comparably available elsewhere, while Handley's *Brigg Fair* is better than Barbirolli's and stands up well against Beecham's now elderly stereo LP; of four versions of *A Song of Summer* currently on offer he takes second place only to Eric Fenby. This is, then, a fine Delius collection. The digital recording, though unremarkable, is very pleasing and the whole disc an all-round bargain.'

Mr Handley has stated quite unequivocally, both in a talk to the Society and more recently on the BBC, that his approach to Delius owes nothing at all to the influence of Sir Thomas Beecham: this may, in many members' minds, bear out the substance of the first of these two reviews. But let us attempt to clear up a possible confusion here. Sir Thomas had a highly personal way with Delius's music that was not above alteration of both dynamics and tempi so it is obvious that any conductor who, quite properly, takes the original scores as his basis will often be proceeding along parallel rather than the same lines. Take an example: in the baritone number 'By the sad waters of separation' from *Songs of Sunset* (SXL30440) where this line appears for the second time preceded by the cor anglais melody (three bars before 30), Beecham adopts a distinctly slower tempo and then returns to his original speed at 'If you be dead ...' (four bars before 32). In the score there is no indication that this should happen and so Sir Charles Groves in his recording (ASD2437), faithfully following what Delius's score indicates, does not do it. Now let us take a direct Beecham/Handley comparison from *Brigg Fair*, after figure 18 towards the end of the long slow interlude just before the first of the six horn calls which conclude this passage. Here Sir Thomas (on ASD357) expands the viola phrase so that the horn call grows out

of it; but Delius marks a *piano* mid-way through the viola phrase, and Mr Handley shows what a difference that dynamic marking can make.

These two examples may begin (but only begin!) to clarify why it is impractical in many ways to compare other conductors with Beecham in Delius. Where a comparison can be worthwhile, perhaps, is in a work such as *In a Summer Garden* where Sir Thomas had no need to make any changes apart from dynamic markings; though here Mr Handley has the misfortune to come up against one of the most flawless Delius performances ever committed to disc. On its own merits, however, his is certainly not a poor performance; that it is not particularly distinguished, in my view, comes about largely because the effect of tempi which are sensitively chosen (if rigidly held) are negated by insensitive orchestral playing, prosaic phrasing and the absence of real beauty of sound.

There is one important respect, though, in which Mr Handley is very much akin to Beecham: like Sir Thomas he always keeps the music moving. This has the effect of imparting not only the essential continuity but also considerable structural strength to his accounts of both *Brigg Fair* and *Eventyr*, which is largely why I view his reading of the *English Rhapsody* as superior to that of Sir John Barbiroli, with its frequent drawing-out of tempi, most noticeably in the solemn march-like variation with its tolling bell. Mr Handley's tempo is much more viable here; on the other hand Sir John conjures a magical atmosphere in the dreamy interlude which you will seek in vain in the new version. *Eventyr* would seem to be, on the whole, easier of actual interpretation than either of these, with its almost Straussian power and brilliance of effect (in which, incidentally, surely lay its appeal for Rudolph Kempe, whose performances of it were invariably successful: he could identify with it, whereas the long-drawn out sweetness of *In a Summer Garden* or the intimacy of *Songs of Sunset* would not occasion the same response). On the new record good, solid Hallé playing makes out a good case and Mr Handley ensures a satisfactory balance almost everywhere: only at the very end might the audibility of the concluding cello pizzicato be thought to be miscalculated – until you look at the score and find that those six notes are directed to be played by one cello only and are marked *pianissimo* as well.

A Song of Summer is successful, too, but yields to Eric Fenby's warmer style and more personal phrasing, while the whole piece is realised in RPO playing that is superior to the Hallé's; and I wish Mr Handley had not decided on an acceleration mid-way through the first big climactic passage just at the point where Delius writes into his score 'Broader'.

These points notwithstanding I stand by the 'Classical Music' review (which is hardly surprising since I wrote it). A final word about the recording, which, although by the latest digital process, is unremarkable and little different to a really good analogue production. My test pressings were very poor, too, as evidently were those sent to the 'Monthly Guide', and a later copy of the published disc was not a great deal better. So beware poor pressings: even though the record is an inexpensive one (and some dealers accordingly expect buyers to be less fussy about quality) members will know how vital a silent surface is to their enjoyment of Delius.

Lyndon Jenkins

GRAINGER PLAYS DELIUS ON PIANO ROLLS

Legendary Artists Play Piano for Four Hands: Volume 2. Liszt *Concerto Pathe-tique* (played by Lerner & Shavitz); Ravel *Mother Goose* movements (Polly & Walter Damrosch); Litolf *Scherzo* (Lambert & Reisenberg); Delius *North Country Sketches* (Grainger & Leopold); Schubert *Marche Heroique* (Friedman). KLAVER KS132 (Klavier Records, 10520 Burbank Boulevard, North Holly-wood, CA 91601, USA).

One More Day. Grainger *Jutish Medley*; Grieg *Norwegian Folk-songs* Op.66 Nos. 1, 2, 14, 10, 19, 16 & 18; Guion *Sheep and Goat Walkin' to the Pasture and Turkey in the Straw*; Grainger *Irish Tune from County Derry* and *One More Day, My John*; Delius *Brigg Fair* (with Ralph Leopold); Stanford arr. Grainger *Irish Dances*. Percy Grainger (piano). LARRIKIN LRP 034 (Larrikin Records, PO Box 162, Paddington 2021, NSW, Australia. UK distributors Conifer Records, Horton Road, W Drayton, Middlesex).

These two records, of rather restricted availability, both contain important historical documents. In each case it preserves, if through the less than ideal medium of the piano roll, the interpretation of a major Delius work with which the recording artist, Percy Grainger, was closely associated, both in its original orchestral version and as represented here, in piano transcription. They are furthermore interpretations which the composer heard and presumably approved. This review serves then, not only as a timely observance of the Grainger Centenary but also as a reminder of the close relationship between these two composers. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to suggest that, but for Grainger, one of the works here included would never have materialised. His association with both *Brigg Fair* and *North Country Sketches* is therefore worth summarising as a background to these recordings.

On April 11 1905 at the market town of Brigg, Grainger took down the Lincolnshire folk-song *Brigg Fair* from the singing of Joseph Taylor, on the very day in fact that the seventy-two year-old bailiff had won the new folk-song class at the North Lincolnshire Musical Competition with the horse racing folk-song *Creeping Jane*. Three years later in July 1908, at the London studios of the Gramophone Company, Taylor was persuaded to record several folk-songs, including *Brigg Fair* (once available in LP transfer on LEA 4050 'Unto Brigg Fair' from Leader Sound Ltd., 5 North Villas, London NW1). In the meantime Grainger had made his own setting of *Brigg Fair* for tenor solo and unaccompanied chorus, completed on January 18 1906 and first performed at that year's Brigg Festival. That, as a result of their meeting the following year, Delius composed (and dedicated to Grainger) his rhapsody *Brigg Fair* is well known. What is perhaps less widely known is that Delius originally intended ending his orchestral variations with a choral setting of the folk-song (see the sketch in *Delius – A Life in Pictures* p.60), somewhat in the fashion of his earlier set of variations, *Appalachia*. In August 1928 Grainger conducted Delius's *Brigg Fair* in the Hollywood Bowl (his programme note for the concert was reprinted in Journal 67).

Three years earlier to the month, Grainger had made his first visit to Grez where he was joined by Balfour Gardiner in entertaining the ailing Delius with sessions of piano playing. On this and their few subsequent occasions their repertoire included Heseltine's arrangements of *North Country Sketches* for piano duet and *Brigg Fair* for two pianos, in addition amongst other things to Grainger's own arrangements for two pianos of *Dance Rhapsody No 1* and *The Song of the High Hills*. At the time Grainger was an exclusive recording artist for the Aeolian Company which produced the Duo-Art piano rolls featured in these records under review. For them with Ralph Leopold (a friend of Grainger's since his U.S. Army days) he recorded *North Country Sketches* and *Brigg Fair*, the former in the Heseltine arrangement and the latter most likely using the published piano duet transcription by Dagmar Juhl. (The record sleeve states that the version used is one 're-arranged by Percy Grainger for four hands' but in fact no arrangement by him of this work is known). Thanks to Grainger, during part of 1927 and 1928 Delius had been lent a Steinway player-piano and was therefore able to listen to these works on rolls that may have been the equivalent of test pressings. Certainly by May 1928 Jelka was writing to Grainger that they 'had not yet received the *real* rolls of *Brigg Fair* and N.C.Sk'

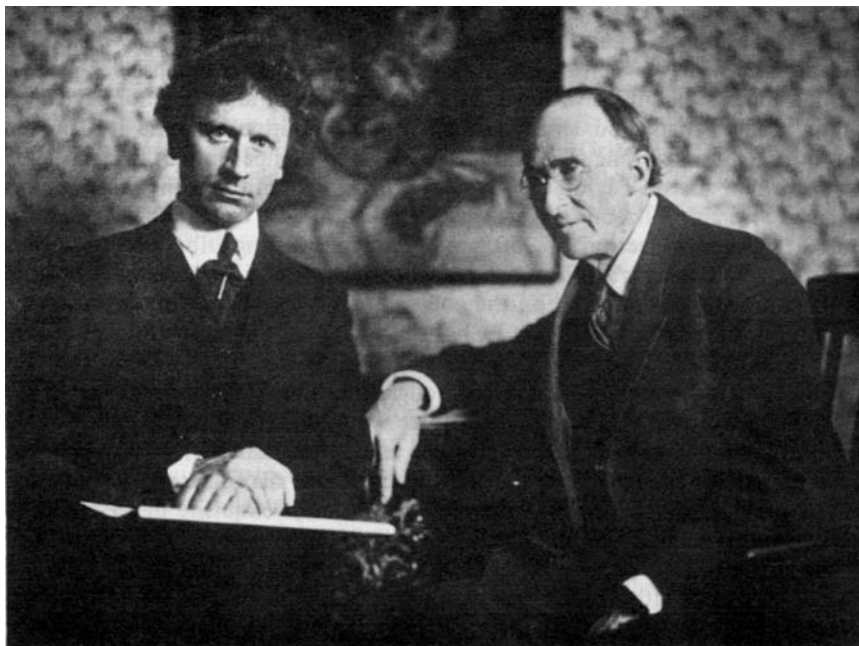
Grainger's initial acquaintance with *North Country Sketches* was quite possibly hearing the four-handed piano version played as part of a Delius birthday concert at Frankfurt on January 29 1923. (While he was not actually playing in that work himself, in the same concert he was a partner in his own transcription of *Dance Rhapsody No 1*.) Just over a month later, also in Frankfurt, he most likely heard the orchestral version conducted by Paul von Klenau in an all-Delius concert for which Grainger prepared the chorus in *The Song of the High Hills*. The next year, on April 28 1924, Grainger himself conducted the American premières of *North Country Sketches* and *The Song of the High Hills* at Bridgeport, Connecticut, repeating the programme two days later in New York (see Journal 67 p.17). These Grainger-Delius piano rolls have, then, a special significance.

But what of these recordings? And how do they stand alongside the familiar orchestral versions? On several counts the more successful of the two is *North Country Sketches*. The mechanical realisation of the rolls on the Klavier record is marginally superior to that on Larrikin whose Steck Boudoir Grand is no match for the unspecified Klavier instrument. It is always a fascinating experience to hear Delius's orchestral works played on the piano and *North Country Sketches* here proves remarkably effective. Much less is lost of its austere beauty and power and one is certainly less aware of the absence of tone colour than in *Brigg Fair* where the variation treatment of the tune relies heavily on changing orchestral hues. Interpretatively, too, *Brigg Fair* takes second place for the playing is somewhat heavier and occasionally without the essential unanimity between the two pairs of hands. But in both works one is aware of Grainger's disconcerting habit of spreading his chords. Without seeming hurried, Grainger's tempi are generally a little quicker than Beecham's, taking 3½ minutes off the latter's 1928 recording of *Brigg Fair*, for example.

Not everything comes off. As one might expect, the magical introduction to *Brigg Fair* is lost in piano transcription, and how one misses the oboe's closing statement of the tune! With the piano's lack of real sustaining power, the equal weighting of tune and off-beat accompaniment in the slow *maestoso* variation makes for a rather bumpy ride. But at the other extreme, in *North Country Sketches* some of the quaver and semi-quaver chromatic runs are wonderfully effective on the piano. Two small points in relation to that work: anyone following from the orchestral score will notice the curious addition of a note in the fifth bar of *Autumn* and on hearing the third movement, *Dance*, some will be surprised at the way in which the Scotch snap semi-quaver is 'swallowed' by the following longer note.

While these versions of course provide no substitute for their orchestral counterparts, they should not be overlooked, especially a fine *North Country Sketches*, while the other record provides a further link between the two composers, a reminder that both were friends of Grieg. Here Grainger plays several of the Op. 66 Norwegian folk-songs, including the one called *In Ola Valley* that is probably better known to us through *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. Try these records if you can.

S.F.S.L.



Percy Grainger and Frederick Delius in Frankfurt, 1923

PERCY GRAINGER

Midlands Branch Meeting: November 7th 1981

One of the privileges that membership of the Midlands Delius Society brings is to enjoy talks from eminent and distinguished musicians, prepared to travel north of Watford to educate and illuminate us, and enjoy the now legendary Midlands hospitality. Our visitor on Saturday 7th November was John Bird, no less, the author of a now standard biography of Percy Grainger that has recently received the seal of public approval and acceptance by appearing in paperback (Faber and Faber £5.95). The twenty or so members who converged on Dick Kitching's home in Derbyshire with high expectations were not disappointed.

Whether or not we are left with any feeling that the central enigma of that strange, rumbustious, enormously talented yet tortured and elusive character Percy Grainger was finally solved, was another matter, nor, I think, would John Bird have wished it to be so. What he was concerned to do, and did with great cogency, was to tear away the 'mythical garbage' and legend that has grown round Grainger, and which he himself encouraged, to reveal the real character on which we could then make our own judgement. This was why he devoted a great deal of the early part of his talk to Grainger's folk song collection as it contains so many clues to his character. There was the intellectual honesty which compelled him to make phonograph recordings of his singers, because he knew that ordinary musical notation and syntax could not adequately encompass the vocal range of these singers, and that any attempt to do so would inevitably be diluted and infused with the personality and prejudices of the amanuensis. Typically, this led him into conflict with the establishment, the Folk Song Society, Cecil Sharp, Lucy Broadwood and Vaughan Williams. Curiously, time has proved him both right and wrong. The National Folk Song Competition at Brigg in 1905 that crowned Joseph Taylor, the 'owner' of *Brigg Fair* and now the most famous of named English folk song singers was a landmark in the collection of folk song, and the unique collection of 250 wax cylinders a lasting tribute to Grainger's industry. Yet Grainger's concern that folk song must stand in its own right, that as *The Midwife* in its realisation the collector's job was simply to see it into the world and leave it to stand as it is, has been ignored. Grainger never used folk song in extended works, as Vaughan Williams, Bartok, Kodaly and for that matter Tchaikovsky did, because he thought it wrong. Yet the final fruit of the 1906 Brigg Festival was not Taylor's prize winning song *Creeping Jane* (which we heard complete with throat clearing and improvisations) but *Brigg Fair*, transformed by Grainger into the most haunting of all folk song settings and distilled once again by Delius into perhaps the most exquisite of all his recollections of the English Countryside.

We also learnt about Grainger's obsession with replacing Italian dynamic and expressive marks with English words, some of his own creation. We heard a contemporary pianist playing *Country Gardens*, ignoring Grainger's markings as being clearly too eccentric, and then heard Grainger, a youthful 75, playing the same piece in his own unique way and clearly adhering to his own expression marks.

John Bird also catered for those of us whose interests lie as much in the man and his times as in his music (yes – the Midlands Branch does have a few such heretics!). We have never had a speaker before who was able to fill every table top with so much fascinating illustrative material – many concert programmes, photos of Grainger from his concert tours in many parts of the world, including a splendid one of him arriving in the Australian outback by oxen team, a photo of Joseph Taylor and some sketches of Grainger by Singer Sargent and Maxwell Armfield. Our speaker also discoursed obligingly on the subject of Grainger's marriage in the Hollywood Bowl before 20,000 people and the annoyance (to put it mildly) this caused Ella, his Swedish wife, who imagined the Hollywood Bowl to be some small rural retreat! We were also intrigued to hear of Grainger's period as Bandsman, 2nd Class, in the American Army during the Great War, and of his expedition to collect Raratongan and Maori folk songs.

Possibly, in need of sustenance ourselves after being dazzled by the details of Grainger's super-energetic life, the Midlands Group members gratefully consumed the splendid supper provided by Dick and Wyn. Whilst they ate, some ruminated a little further on the aforementioned enigmas of Grainger's and Delius' lives – which is a habit frequently indulged in by Midland Delians when under the influence of good food and wine and a stimulating speaker like John Bird. We owe him many thanks.

Peter and Margaret Trotman

ELGAR'S ENIGMA SOLVED

Midlands Branch Meeting : December 12th 1981

In a now-celebrated letter to the organiser of the 1903 Morecambe Music Festival, Elgar expressed the opinion that 'the living centre of music in Great Britain is not London, but somewhere farther North'. So one was tempted to reflect on the evening of Saturday 12th December 1981 when the Midlands Branch of the Delius Society pulled off the *coup* of arranging a second visit from Professor Ian Parrott, who occupies the Chair of Music at Aberystwyth University. Two medals deserve to be awarded for that night: the first to the Professor for sustaining the journey from Aberystwyth to Dick Kitching's home in the wilds of Derbyshire in heavy snow. As he commented at the outset of his talk: one might paraphrase Beecham in remarking 'the train that you have just boarded is the one you thought you had missed two hours ago'. The other medal was due to Marjorie Tapley, who braved a most unpleasant illness to sing the vocal illustrations, capably adding point to the Professor's subject.

This was 'A Solution to Elgar's Enigma'. (Ian Parrott has been described by Michael Kennedy as 'Britain's current Enigma-solver-in-Chief!') The Professor, author of the volume on Elgar in 'The Master Musicians' series, dismissed the many ingenious solutions that have been advanced from time to time as the missing counterpoint to the theme, including 'Auld Lang Syne', 'Home, Sweet Home', 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay' and Chopin's G minor Nocturne, Op.37 No.1. Instead he attaches much importance to Variation XI ('GRS'), which he considers far too subtly orchestrated to represent a clumsy bulldog, seeing rather a tribute to an organist who was reputed never to have played a wrong pedal-note: not only Sinclair, but J.S. Bach himself. (Had not Elgar remarked to Jaeger when he was composing the work that he 'looked at the theme through the personality (as it were) of another Johnny'?)

In fact there exists an unfinished Pedal Exercitium in G minor by Bach which bears a striking resemblance to the opening of this variation:

BACH



ELGAR



Furthermore, the choral variations on *Sei Gegrusset*, also in G minor, contain the falling 7ths and rising scale characteristic of the central section of the *Enigma* theme and, like it, each ends with a *Tierce de Picardie*. Thus, feels Professor Parrott, the 'dark saying' and the larger theme which "goes", but is not played' may be the abiding influence and inspiration of the greatest of all composers.

A most fascinating evening, then, and well-attended by Midlands Branch members despite appalling weather conditions. Have I omitted to mention anything? But of course – the *raison d'être* for all Midlands Delius meetings (tell it not in Gath!): the splendid repast generously provided on this occasion by Peter and Wenda Williams (who had been prevented from holding the meeting in their own house by family illness) and the fruits of the vine, a cheeky little number kindly brought along by Peter Thorp. I shall go again!

C.W.R.

[We understand that an up-to-date account of his *Enigma* researches by Professor Parrott will appear in Christopher Redwood's forthcoming volume *An Elgar Companion* – Ed.]

OBITUARY: MARJORIE TAPLEY

It is with very great regret that I have to report the death of Midlands Branch member Marjorie Tapley on the 19th May 1982. Midlands members will remember the pleasure she gave on numerous occasions singing Delius songs (the Verlaine settings were particular favourites of hers). She also sang the part of Vreli when we performed a concert version of Scene 4 of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* and London members will recall her singing excerpts from *Irmelin* at Holborn. In addition she sang locally in a performance (with piano accompaniment) of *Songs of Sunset* and also performed many times the Delius unaccompanied part songs with local groups of singers.

Her repertoire was wide, ranging from the Elizabethans to Gershwin, and she performed in opera and oratorio. Her last public performance was shortly before Christmas in Handel's *Messiah* and after that she sang illustrations at a Delius Branch meeting for Professor Parrot's talk on Elgar on 12th December 1981. This was to be her farewell performance, although we were not to know it at the time.

R.B.K.

Correspondence

From Ronald Kirkman, Geneva.

As every member of the Society knows, the year 1984 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Delius, Elgar and Holst, and I imagine that plans are already being laid for concerts, exhibitions and lectures to commemorate the occasion in the United Kingdom and the United States.

It occurred to me some time ago that an ideal way to bring the names of these three British composers before a world-wide public would be through the issue of a special series of commemorative stamps, and I wrote to the Post Office to suggest this. From the Post Office's reply I learnt that these particular anniversaries *are* on the list of some 200 subjects clamouring for a place in the 1984 stamp programme and that they will be "carefully considered" when the programme for that year is drawn up, probably towards the end of 1982.

I feel strongly that if every member of the Society – and the Delius Trust, Elgar Society and British Music Society too – wrote to the Post Office to press the claims of Delius, Elgar and Holst to a special stamp issue, the Post Office to suggest this. From the Post Office's reply I learnt that these particular anniversaries *are* on the list of some 200 subjects clamouring for a place names of these three composers would travel all over the world, from Abu Dhabi to Zimbabwe, from Iceland to Indonesia.

I suggest that anybody who feels as I do should write now – because soon it will be too late – to the Post Office Marketing Department, Postal Headquarters, Headquarters Building, St Martins le Grand, London EC1A 1HQ. After all, many of us won't be around to see the hundredth anniversary, in 2034!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday July 27th at 4.30 p.m. Great Hall, Bristol University

Delius's Cello Concerto with soloist Joanne Cole and the Bedfordshire County Youth Orchestra conducted by Michael Rose, as part of the ISME fifteenth Biennial Conference.

Friday July 30th at 8.00 p.m. Corn Exchange, Bedford

Delius's Cello Concerto with soloist Robert Cohen and the Bedfordshire County Youth Orchestra conducted by Michael Rose, as part of 'A Musical Weekend' presented by Sir Thomas Beecham Trust Ltd.

Wednesday August 25th at 8.00 p.m. Three Choirs Festival, Hereford

Delius's *In a Summer Garden*. Sir Charles Groves conducts the RPO. The programme also includes Dvorak's Violin Concerto and the Fifth Symphony of Vaughan Williams.

Sunday August 29th at 3.00 p.m. Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Edinburgh Festival Percy Grainger Centenary Concert. The Scottish Baroque Ensemble performs works by Grainger and Kenneth Leighton (*Variations on a theme of Grainger*) conducted by Leonard Friedman, and Eric Fenby conducts Delius's *Air and Dance* and *Two Aquarelles*. Tickets £4.50 and £2.25. Tel: 031-225 5756.

Tuesday September 21st at 7.00 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London

Delius Society meeting: Eric Fenby talks about Jelka Delius.

Thursday October 7th at 8.00 p.m. Royal Festival Hall, London

Delius's *Brigg Fair*. Sir Georg Solti conducts the LPO in a concert of Berlioz, Mozart, Delius and Strauss to celebrate the orchestra's 50th anniversary of its first public concert and repeating Beecham's programme of that historic occasion. Tickets from £3 to £10.

Saturday October 16th Fairfield Hall, Croydon

Julian Lloyd Webber performs Delius's Cello Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley. Commercial recording to follow.

Thursday October 21st at 7.00 p.m. BMIC, 10 Stratford Place, London W1.

Delius Society meeting: John Bird presents a Grainger Centenary talk.

Friday November 19th at 7.00 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5 Tavistock Place, London.

Delius Society meeting: an evening with Norman Del Mar.

